



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

PARSON WAUGH'S TUMULT

A CHAPTER FROM "LANDMARKS OF OLD PRINCE WILLIAM."

BY FAIRFAX HARRISON.

The embers of Bacon's rebellion smoldered on the Potomac for some years after order had been officially restored in 1677. This was due partly to the undisciplined character of the frontier population but chiefly to the diligent stirring of discontent by that "rank Baconist," Josias Fendall, during the years of his exile from Maryland. In July, 1681, Lord Baltimore testified¹ that by such influences the people of Stafford were "as ripe and readdy for an other Rebellion as ever they were," that "this Fendall has great influence on and interest in most of the rascalls in the North part of Virginia, where he was for some time when he was forced to absent himself from Maryland." It was the moment when new civil war was expected in England following the dissolution, in March, 1681, of a passionate parliament, the moment of Shaftesbury and Monmouth, of *Absalom and Achitophel*, and Baltimore charged that Fendall, counting on such civil war, was inciting his followers with the promise of a time coming when "there would be no establisht laws in England and so he and his crew might possess themselves here and in Virginia of what Estates they pleased." Baltimore was so disturbed that he even suspected the loyalty of Secretary Spencer because that able gentleman had recently entertained Fendall at Nominy,² little realizing that Spencer was to succeed in maintaining order

¹ In a letter from Maryland to the President of the Privy Council, 19 July, 1681, printed (from C. O. papers) in Scharf, *History of Maryland*, I, 285.

² See the depositions in *Md. Archives*, xv, 364, ff.

where he himself was to fail. As all the world knows, there was no civil war in England in 1681 and the "rank Baconists" in Virginia had patiently to wait for a more propitious day, as the Whigs did at home. Monmouth's rebellion proved only a flash in the pan.

The appearance of Fendall on the page of Virginia history is significant only as a preface to what happened at the time of the "glorious revolution" against James II, for it indicates that the foundation had been well laid there for a revolutionary change of government. Considering the "Cavalier" constitution of Virginia society as some Virginia historians have painted it, it is perhaps surprising to observe the unanimity of this sentiment and to read some of the Virginia names appended to the assurances of Whig support which were sent to the Prince of Orange.³ In Maryland, on the other hand, the proprietary government played true to form. Had the event been different Rachel might then have usurped Leah's title of the "Old Dominion." The weight of the younger sister's official influence was put on the side of caution and the proclamation of William and Mary was delayed until malcontents had their opportunity, the proprietary lost his government, and Maryland history boasted a "Protestant Revolution."⁴ It is of curious interest that, before this revolution got started, a similar agitation had been set on foot in Stafford which failed to develop heroic proportions not so much for want of intention as because Nicholas Spencer had a firmer grasp on the reins of local government than did the deputy governors of Maryland.

In March, 1688/9,⁵ while the people of Virginia and Maryland were still uncertain as to the course of events in England, the Maryland Indians began to swarm across the Potomac,

³ *Va. Mag.*, vi, 389; xx, 5; *Cal. State Papers*, Am. & W. I.

⁴ The best account of this event, written with documents not available to the earlier historians, is Dr. B. C. Steiner's paper in *American Historical Association Report*, 1897, p. 279. The Virginia tumult which precipitated it is noticed from tradition in Burk, *History of Va.*, ii, 305, and *DeBowe's Review*, xxx, 89.

⁵ The story is told in detail in the minutes of the Maryland Council, *Md. Archives*, viii, 70 ff.

saying they were going hunting, as was their annual custom, in the Stafford backwoods. As it turned out, this was literally true but at this particular season the good people of Stafford, politically panicky anyway and feeling always, as frontier people do, the dread of the unknown and of the wilderness, regarded the movement with suspicion. In such a state of mind Burr Harrison⁶ was fishing on the river off Potomac Creek and got a haul destined to shake Maryland, as well as Stafford, to the foundations. Returning home, he told his news to his neighbours, John West⁷ and Ralph Platt and together, threshing over some of Josias Fendall's old straw,[†] they built up a theory connecting that news with the movement of the Maryland Indians. Accordingly, they went before the Stafford Court and reported, whereupon Harrison was ordered to examine the Indians and report again. He apparently got most of his colouring matter from a Piscataway named Wawostough, who was later denounced by his Emperor as "a runaway from them and an Idle person."⁸ On such

⁶ Burr Harrison (1637-1706) was the immigrant ancestor of the family of that name ever since leaders in Prince William, Fauquier and Loudoun. (See *Va. Mag.*, xxiii, 214 ff.) He was the son of Cuthbert Harrison, of St. Margaret's Westminster (Hayden, 512) and came to Stafford before October 25, 1669, when, with William Harrys and Thomas Baxter, he patented 1200 acres on "Asmale Creek that falls into the River Occoquan." It is a curious fact that in this patent (*Virginia Land Book*, vi, 295) as in all the records of his participation in Parson Waugh's disturbance, Burr Harrison's name is spelled Harrys or Harris. It was not until he became a justice of the Stafford court in 1698 that the Virginia records show it correctly. The parish register of St. Margaret's Westminster is, however, conclusive that Burr's father's name was Harrison. It is possible that the "William Herris" who was buried on Neabsco Creek in 1698 "by birth a Britaine, a good soldier, a good husband & kinde neighbour" (*W. & M. Quar.*, iv, 195), was of this family.

⁷ For his descendants see *W. & M. Quart.*, x, 65.

[†] In a letter dated July 25, 1681, to Lord Culpeper, then in England, Nicholas Spencer reported a rumor then current in Stafford and evidently the handiwork of Fendall, that Lord Baltimore had employed the Senecas "to cut off most of the protestants of Maryland." (*Cal. State Papers*, Am. & W. I., 1681-85, p. 93).

⁸ *Md. Archives*, viii, 90. Secretary Spencer, in his despatch of April 27, 1689 (*Cal. State Papers*, Am. & W. I., 1689-92, No. 92, p. 32) throws an interesting side light on the situation, in respect to this Indian: "Suspecting the reality of the Indian's information, I ordered him to be secured, not doubting but by re-examination to discover the certainty of the designed forgery, but the notorious persons who set the

testimony, pieced out elsewhere, Harrison made up, in a deposition, a startling record, viz:

"That on Saturday last he met with a boate goeing up the River that came lately from St. Maries and after inquiring what newes in those parts they told him that Coll. Pye was lately heard to say that he did hope before Easter day to wash his hands in the protestant blood and that if he had the prince of orange there he would thrust his sword up to the Beame in him. And they did further informe the said Harris that there were two or three masters of shipp dayly looking out for Coll. Pye to carry him on board shipp in order to transport him for England."

But what followed was more disturbing:

"And further the said Harris declared there yesterday came over from Pomonky with him an Indian called Chicarter, a warr captaine that was going to Capt. Brent, and told him Capt. Brent had sent for him, and further the said Indian told him that they did heare the Englishmen in England had cut off their King's head and that there were abundance of dutchmen comeing in a great many ships and that they should bring abundance of Match Coats and other things with them . . . that the King of Piscattaway hath hired the Seneca Indians by reason that they might have the better opportunity to Kill the people of Virginia telling them that they must make haste and Kill the protestants before the shipping did come in for after the shipping came they will then Kill the papists and then they would Kill all the Indians."

This roorback was at once spread broadcast among the people, not only of Stafford but of Maryland. Across the Potomac it grew with the food it fed on. John Addison of

Indian to work prevented a detection of their villainy by probably destroying him. The party sent to apprehend him weakly entrusted him to West and Harris who offered to bring him in: and he has since been discovered, murdered in the woods, by West, who had best reason to know where to find him. He and others are to answer for their part in the matter."

Maryland wrote to John West that he heard that 9,000 French and Senecas had landed at Capt. Bourne's upon the Cliffs of Anne Arundel and had murdered Bourne and his family, wherefore he invited instant help from Virginia. Another Marylander, John Courts, wrote to Capt. Lawrence Washington that he heard that 10,000 "foreign indians" had inforced at the head of Patuxent. The Maryland authorities kept their heads and took prompt action, which soon allayed the panic north of the Potomac. All that was necessary was to establish and publish the fact that there were no Senecas in Maryland.

But in Stafford there was another story. There the people abandoned their plantations and arrayed themselves in arms. A Maryland officer reported that "the people enfort themselves [not only] in Stafford County but all over that Collony, from the bordering part of which we doe dayly here the beating of drums and volleyes of shott." The Maryland authorities apparently interpreted this activity as preparations for an invasion of their territory. They were even moved to charge that the hope of plunder in Maryland was the real motive for starting the agitation.⁹ But no such invasion was contemplated. Stafford had already concentrated on her own affairs. She had caught the infection of a disease then endemic in most of the English colonies in America.¹⁰

The Brents who had lived in Stafford for many years were Catholics. They had been discreet in their relations with their protestant neighbours, and had never been molested. Indeed, in 1668, the Stafford County Court gave Capt. Giles Brent a certificate¹¹ that they had had "21 years' experience of his fidelity in not seducing any persons to the Roman Catholic religion." But Burr Harrison's news from Maryland offered an opportunity for fanatical agitation and the incumbent of Overwharton parish¹² took full advantage of it. This Parson

⁹ *Md. Archives*, viii, 82.

¹⁰ In *Old Virginia and Her Neighbours*, Fiske has an illuminating note collecting the facts as to anti-catholic agitation in the colonies at this time, and discussing the philosophy of it.

¹¹ *Va. Mag.*, viii, 329.

¹² It does not appear from any surviving record when the name Overwharton was applied to the parish. The surviving register begins in 1720. In 1680 it was designated "Stafford parish, Chotanck." *Va. Mag.*, i, 243.

John Waugh had already been in trouble with the authorities for his lack of respect for the law.¹³ He was apparently a natural agitator, what was called at the time "of enthusiastic principles" and courted popularity. Egged on by his son-in-law, the second George Mason,¹⁴ Waugh's sermons now stirred the community to frenzy. George Brent, of Woodstock, implicated by Burr Harrison's testimony, undoubtedly had relations with Maryland Indians but, so far as the record developed, these relations had nothing whatever to do with politics. But being, like his uncle Giles, a Catholic and so now under a new suspicion, George Brent became on a sudden the target of a passionate popular attack.¹⁵ A sea captain then in the Potomac observed¹⁶ that "the Stafford men were wholly intent to kill, rob and burn what Capt. Brent had."

In this crisis, the resident members of the Virginia Council, Messrs. Spencer, Lee and Allerton, being under no illusion, showed their eminent good sense. Secretary Spencer wrote¹⁷ that "to take off the clamours against Capt. Brent and to justify his innocency, wee ordered his house to be searched for Arms and Amunicon and directed him to take up his being at Coll. Fitzhugh's, where the people might be assured he could not converse with any designing any ill against the inhabitants." But, as it happened, Fitzhugh, Brent's law partner, though protestant, was an out-spoken Tory, and the choice of an asylum was perhaps not happy. Although the search developed that Brent did not have in his house sufficient arms for his own defence, association with him put even Fitzhugh in danger. The latter wrote,¹⁸ soon after, that he had his "house most part of the time constantly thronged and in

¹³ Westmoreland records, 1674, in *W. & M. Quar.*, xv, 182, and see *ibid.*, p. 189, for Parson Waugh's descendants.

¹⁴ Rowland, i, 19.

¹⁵ The prejudice thus engendered against George Brent persisted for several years. In December, 1692, he was presented by the grand jury of Stafford as a "popish recusant" and later a motion was made in the county court to compel him to take the test oath as a condition of continuing to practice law. *Cal. Va. State Papers*, i, 46.

¹⁶ *Md. Archives*, viii, 93.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁸ *Fitzhugh Letters*, *Va. Mag.*, iii, 257.

daily expectation of being plundered by the Rabble, and once of being treachously murdered."

Over these troubled waters Parson Waugh rode the whirlwind. Beginning as a colonial Titus Oates, under the inspiration of his fellow enthusiast, John Coode, the whilom parson of Maryland who was about to lead a successful revolution in that province, Waugh gradually developed into what appeared for a moment to be a menace to the Virginia government. From general thunder against the Catholics, he evolved the more dangerous thesis that there "being no King in England, there was no Government here," and that the people should remain in arms in their own defence.¹⁹ This advice, smacking significantly of the doctrine which Lord Baltimore charged Fendall with preaching in Stafford in 1681, was followed, the alarm spread to the Rappahannock settlements, and serious consequences were averted only by renewed vigorous action on the part of Messrs. Spencer, Allerton and Lee. Assuming the authority of the entire council for the emergency, they anticipated the formal proclamation of the accession of William and Mary,²⁰ arrested the ring leaders, Waugh, Harrison and West, forbade the parson to preach, and suspended George Mason from the command of the Stafford militia.²¹

Parson Waugh was eventually brought before the General Court at Jamestown and there, as William Fitzhugh records,²² "made a publick & humble acknowledgment, by a set form drawn up by the Court and ordered to be Recorded, and is appointed to do the same in our County Court . . . with a hearty penitence for his former faults and a promised obedience for the future, which he sincerely prays for the accomplishment of and for the sake of his Coat to do so."

And with this repentance in its leader, the tumult died down as suddenly as it had begun.

¹⁹ Spencer's despatch, April 29, 1689, *Cal. State Papers*, Am. & W. I., 1689-92, No. 93.

²⁰ The Virginia Council had, on April 26, 1689, ordered the proclamation to be made on May 23rd, following. See Va. Council Minutes in *Randolph MS.*, *Va. Mag.*, xx, 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, *Va. Mag.*, xx, 3, 10.

²² *Fitzhugh Letters*, *Va. Mag.*, iii, 255.